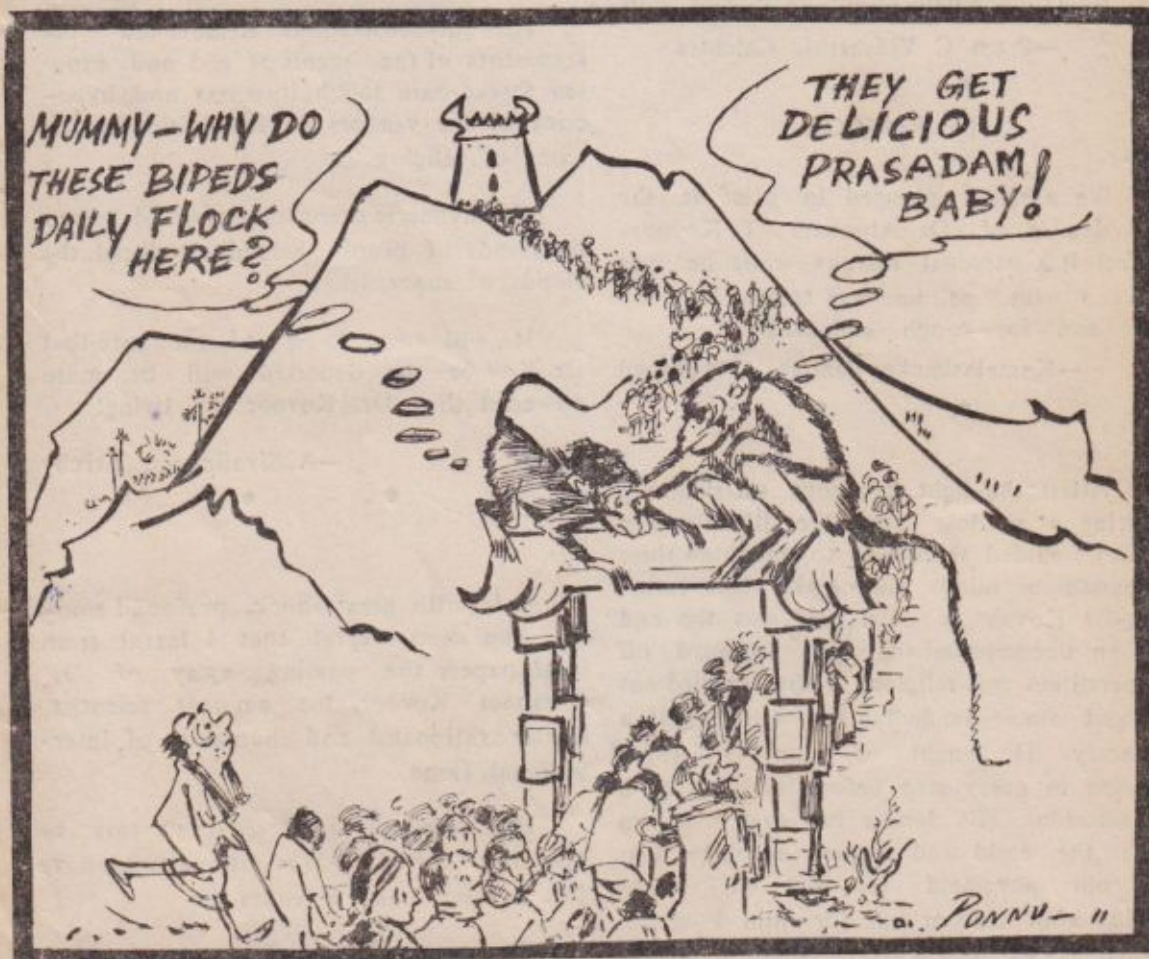


FreeThought

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The First Clergyman was the First Sly Rogue that met the First Fool-Voltaire

Letters

FREETHOUGHT

Sir,

I am one of those who appreciate FREETHOUGHT for its characteristic approach to problems of life. Modern time needs more such journals to inspire the whole society to get transformed.

Please continue your noble task and we, though a small group, are with you.

—Prem C Vidyarthi, Calcutta

* *

Dr. KOVOOR

Sir,

We are all plunged in grief at the sad demise of Dr. Abraham T. Kovoov. I feel it a personal loss as while he was put up with me, he was treated by my Dr. son for cough and cold.

—Kamalashanker Pandya, Ahmedabad

* *

Sir,

Atlast the light has gone off-suddenly casting a shadow over the illumination which guided thousands to enlighten their superstitious minds and make them rational-Dr. Kovoov is dead. It was the end of an uncompromising fight to ward off superstition and religious myths, carried out almost single-handedly for about half a century. He taught us how to apply reason in every step before arriving at a conclusion. His demise has cast a gloom over the world and is even a bigger loss to our movement. He was our moral guide and teacher but for him I doubt whether we could have such a strong foundation to our international movement. His memory will be with us-that cannot be wiped out for years to come.

—S. Krishnan, Bombay

Sir,

Dr. Kovoov has atlast stopped thinking. He used his expert knowledge in exposing the lives of those who lived by cheating the gullible public. Dr. Kovoov's demise has indeed left a void in the world of rationalism. He has laid a solid foundation for the rationalist movement in the country. His innumerable erudite lectures have awakened the society from its long slumber.

His demonstrations demolished the arguments of the agents of god and exposed thread-bare the hollowness and hypocrisy of the vendors of superstition in the name of religion.

His hypnotic exercises performed before thousands of people helped to dispel the clouds of superstition.

It will come to pass-I am sure-that Dr. Kovoov the departed will be more powerful than Dr. Kovoov the living!

—A. Sivalingam, Trichy

* *

Sir,

It is with great shock, profound emotion and deep regret that I learnt from local papers the passing away of Dr. Abraham Kovoov, the eminent scientist, master rationalist and humanist of international fame.

His demise is an irreparable loss to scientific world. We rationalists, have lost a master and a leader.

Please convey my sincere condolences to the concerned members of his family and of the Association of which he was President.

—Regis S. Victorien, Pondicherry

"I evolved into an atheist not because I wanted to, but because the evidence in all my books overwhelmingly pointed to a materialistic universe and against the plausible existence of supernatural beings or gods of any description."

—G. Vincent Runyon

Free thought

Dancing to the R. S. S. Tune

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Day after day, we observe the Government functionaries going closer and closer to the ways of the R.S.S. Right from the Prime Minister down to an employee in an office, all of them are suddenly convinced that religion is the solution to all our misery.

Mr. Morarji Desai did not find time to discuss the economic situation during his party parliamentarians' meet. He has no patience for workers who protest against their exploitation. But he has one full week to 'discourse' on Mahabharatha, a mere mythological fiction written more than two thousand years ago. He would search for solutions to India's all ills in this 'divine' composition. It does not matter to him that neither he nor those who surround him are the ideal specimens of this century. Nor is he willing to derive inspiration from such leaders who have transformed poor, bigoted societies into strong, modern nations in the twentieth century.

Instead Mr. Morarji Desai wants to change the educational system to conform to our traditional casteist culture—in order to reassert the supremacy of Brahminism, and the exploitative power of the traders, industrialists and landlords. Like Sai Baba, he dislikes science for leading the present generation 'astray'.

While the R.S.S. foreign minister is busy attending Yagnas (sacrifices involving



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C. A. SESHADRI

Contd on page No. 330

Readers' Forum

Possession by Spirit

Our colleague, S. Kumar tells us that the case that took place in their office premises in June 1978 has made him a believer in the existence of spirits from a non-believer that he was for years (S.T.)

But I, with my experience of hundreds of such patients, ask him not to be a believer as the case cited also is a pure case of hysteria—a peculiar condition of mind developing in sensitive and weak-minded persons.

The belief that at the time of the death of a person, the soul, in order to satisfy his unsatisfied desires of love or hatred remains moving round the place—hovering and haunting—harasses and frightens sensitive persons concerned and such frightened persons go into hysterical fits—declaring that some ghost or spirit or cowife has entered in him or her.

The hysterical condition takes different forms :

Some persons lie unconscious for days together, some become unconscious at intervals. Some during their unconsciousness go into opisthospasmodic curve and fall heavily every few minutes or seconds, some though quite conscious have their mouths wide open with the tongues protruding long out for days together, some cannot swallow anything for days together, some cannot open their eyes for days together etc.

And they all believe that the spirit has entered in brain, throat, mouth, eyes and does not allow them to rest. The belief is so rampant particularly in people residing in or coming from villages that all our persuasion usually is of no use at all. To two patients of mine I said :

MOTHER HYSTERIA

"It is only hysteria and nothing else" and the patients picked up perversely and asked "yes, is it so, doctor, has Mother hysteria entered in her ?"

When doctors fail to cure, Bhuvas and Maulvis are called. A Bhuva makes the patient smell some strong smelling object like chillies or give heavy blows on the patient's cheeks and head and then naturally the unconscious patient becomes semi-conscious and blurts out the name of the person whose spirit he believes has entered in him. Then the Bhuva asks what is his unfulfilled desire and the patient blurts out some petty demand. As soon as that is attended to, the patient gets cured

UNJUST SOCIETY

The unjust structure of our society shatters down the mental power of some persons and as a reaction they themselves start believing that they are ghosts or witches. They move in cemeteries, sing loudly at night and frighten the people around.

Some diseases of the brain develop so rapidly and suddenly that the patients become unconscious and delirious immediately. The high fevers of measles and small pox in children with all their angry looking eruptions on faces and eyes make the appearance of children quite frightening to the onlookers. All these cases are taken by the lay public as some spirits or goddesses entering the persons. But now science has proved beyond doubt that these are virus infections attacking children the infection entering their bodies either because of the direct contact with children with such diseases or through nose.

CEMETERIES WITHOUT GHOSTS

Fires appearing often in cemeteries are proved to be of Phosphorous from the burnt-out or decomposing bones.

So many Bhuvas claim to have seen the ghosts themselves but not one of them has been able to show the same to us even when we have gone with them at the dead of night of black fourteenth day of the year when they say these spirits come out to play. So is the experience of Kaka Kalelkar who has travelled in the mountains and jungles of Himalayas for years.

— Dr. J. D. VOHRA

* *

The use of "possession by spirit" reported by Mr. G. S. Kumar (FREETHOUGHT Sept. 1978) could be rationally explained. It seems, what has puzzled Mr. Kumar is the following factors in the case:

1. A sudden and genuine state of unconsciousness on the part of Gauda, the patient.
2. Total ineffectiveness of medical treatment.
3. Effectiveness of the Maulvi's treatment and Gauda's strange response to his questions.
4. Sincerity and selflessness of the Maulvi

All the factors agreed. Yet there is nothing supernatural in this apparently strange phenomenon. A good deal of research on such cases has already been done by psychiatrists and neurologists. In Medical science it is called possession syndrome—a state in which the organism appears to have been invaded by a new personality. It is a momentary disassociation of personality, an altered state of consciousness. Such a condition is also known as Disassociative Reaction which is symbolic representation of a subconscious conflict that results in hysteria. Hysteria

with religious fervour has been labelled as possession syndrome.

All persons affected by this syndrome are basically mal-adjusted personalities under severe mental strain and suffering from some psychological problem. For them religious delusions and superstitions serve as an escape from their otherwise unbearable real-life situations. A deep-rooted fear complex and frightening sense of insecurity are always at the back. The strangeness of each case depends upon the beliefs of the persons and his/her social and religious background.

Yet, mental afflictions could be complicated and can manifest themselves in various forms. They could be hysteria, stupor, melancholic, schizophrenia etc. (they may or may not have religious fervour) Only a psychiatrist can diagnose a particular case and ascertain its type. Gauda's case could be a kind of schizophrenia. This mental disease was first described by KREPININ in 1896 as *dementia praecox*. It refers to a group of mental illnesses characterised by disorganisation of patient's personality. BLEULER coined the name schizophrenia in 1911 and described its four main types. In this CATATONIC type, the patient suffers from stages of excitement alternating with phases of stupor and muscular rigidity. Gauda seems to have suffered from this. In addition he has religious fervour. Hence it is possession syndrome.

Of course all such academic information is no solution to the problems of a particular case. Each case has its own complications and history. But this information is called only explain that that there is nothing unknown to medical science in such phenomena.

Now coming to Gauda's case, the medical treatment was of no use because it was given without consideration of the root cause that was psychological what is required

in such cases is the right stimuli to which the subconscious mind would respond. Once the patient gets an opportunity to give out his subconsciousness, becomes free from the unbearable strain and becomes normal. Medicines could be used only as aids towards this end but that must be done by a psychiatrist, not by a layman.

Incidentally it may be recalled that Sodium Amythal and LSD drugs are used to bring out the subconscious. Sodium Pentothal is understood to have been administered on criminals so that they could be made to give out the truth. Similar drugs are tried on prisoners of war in order to take out secrets from them. This only to tell that drugs are useful in making a person express his sub-conscious mind.

Gauda's background and statement show that he is a deeply superstitious person deluded with the goodness in his home town. He is also obsessed by fearful appearances demanding something from him. His deep rooted fear complex and sense of insecurity are obvious. But he is not clear about his feelings. He has never shared his inner emotions with others. He is afraid of some one and probably guilty as well, that he has failed to give something to that someone who might chase him like a ghost and cause harm. Under such a burden of mental torture, never told to anyone, he has got the attack.

Now the crucial question: how could the Maulvi cure him. The maulvi has actually acted as a crude psychiatrist, like a barber doing surgery. Under stupor a patient shows a gross lack of responsiveness and usually reacts only to noxious stimuli. The maulvi knows this by his long experience. Hence he puts mustard oil in the patient's ears. It gives burning sensation. The ears are kept closed. In addition the smoke goes into the ears. Thus suffocated and shocked the patient responds and gets the opportunity to blurt out his sub-cons-

cious fears in symbolic utterances. So he gets relief and become normal. The Maulvi could have had some hypnotic effect also.

Since the Maulvi and Gauda are both deluded by beliefs in spirits, a dialogue could be held between the two. Gauda is happy that a bad spirit has been driven out of his body and that the responsibility of the phenomenon is passed on to something beyond his control. This is what human nature likes. The superstitious Maulvi's practice is confined to superstitious people only, and therefore his techniques works on them. And all of them are honestly and sincerely ignorant.

The Maulvi has never understood the root cause. He has given the relief but not cured the patient. Like an illiterate mechanic, he has somehow made the machine start, without detecting the actual fault and setting it right. It is bound to be harmful in the long run. Gauda has been made to believe more in the spirits. Now he need not try to help himself by understanding his own fears and problems. If the strain continues, Gauda may again get the attacks and he would repeat the treatment.

But who can bring a psychiatrist to his help? Like free medical treatment, no free psychiatric treatment is available. It is a costly affair possible only for the rich people. Yet, a sympathetic psychological guidance can also help. Some university faculties of Social Work undertake this free service. But with due apology it may be said, that at times their approach is too bookish and fashionable to be of any use to the sufferer. That is the trouble with theoretical knowledge. Don't you come across degree holders in psychology who are themselves psychological patients, having neither the insight into real life nor the humane approach required to handle the needy. Patients also do not co-operate. Like the maulvi, the psychologist will provide no opportunity to pass

on the blame to something beyond one's control.

Yet wisemen should know that escaping reality is always a far greater evil in the long run ; than facing it. We are after escapes in every walk of life ! Therefore if Mr. Kumar agrees to this he can try to take Gauda into confidence and help him in readjusting with life. Gaudas are available in plenty ; a kumar is rarely to be found.

-Mukund, Shillong.

* *

At the outset I earnestly congratulate you for your broad mind in publishing the article "POSSESSION BY SPIRIT". But I personally feel that you should not have published this.

After reading this article I recollected many experience and matters read.

When I was studying my PUC, I was told by neighbouring women that they were able to see the ghost of a women in the same street, who died some years back. I became curious. Along with a friend I roamed in those surroundings and after I spent one or two sleepless nights in the spot as I was told that the timings of the ghost were midnight or early morning hours. But to my searching eyes nothing was visible. Only those pious Brahmin women could see.

I wish to offer my comments on some points of Mr. Kumar's article.

1. Mr. Kumar says that in the possession of spirit Mr. Gouda murmured names of persons with whom he was familiar. How was this possible ? Spirit possession means the person possessed must become some other person.

2. The author of the article says that the spirit in Mr. Gouda said that it wanted to take Mr. Gouda with him. This means to kill him. If this is possible why don't

the people who were murdered take revenge upon their killers or help the police in tracing the culprits ?

3. The spirit in the Gouda begs not to kill it. Do spirits have death ? What did the Maulvi say about this ?

4. Mr. Kumar says that the patient responded to Doctor's (medical) treatment. So in future if more effective treatment is invented the patients of this kind may not before as if they are possessed by spirits.

5. The Maulvi poured some mustard oil into the ears of the patient. Medical Doctors say that the type of associated with oil bath is a very harmful one. Hence the Maulvi's method cannot and should not be considered as a treatment.

6. The spirit in Mr. Gouda says that it is hungry for days ? How is this ? Where do these spirits get their food regularly ? Where do they keep their plates and vessels ?

7. The spirit says that it wants the blood of a bowl. Why not the meat ?

Recently I was told that in psychology, non-fraudians emphasise that our meaningless, mysterious and horror dreams are due to the influences of man's evolution since some lacs of years from animals. So can't we assume that such influences are also factors in this abnormal behaviour which is being mistaken as spirit possession.

8. After recovery Mr. Gouda narrates some horror dreams. Hence can't we throw this entire story as a mere trance ?

9. To determine the case as a spirit possession Mr. Kumar should have tried to test the powers of the spirit as it is said that spirits possess some teleptic and similar abnormal powers. But unfortunately Mr. Kumar didn't try anything in this way.

10. The spirit was a Hindu. But it responded to Islamic chants of the Maulvi.△

—C. Chandrasekhar Vijayawada,

News & Notes

TRUTH UNDER TRIAL

The obscurantist forces have started the offensive against rational and atheistic views. In April (II) 1978 an article written by Soma Sublok, an active member of IRA and wife of Prof. Surendra K. S. Ajnat, Vice President of IRA, appeared in the Sarita under the caption SOUL AND REBIRTH. Some sections of Hindu obscurantist forces took notice of it and urged the Delhi Administration to file a case against her and the Sarita. The case has been filed under 295 (a) IPC. She has applied for anticipatory bail to avoid arrest.

IRA and DRA are taking necessary action in this regard.

* *

IRA BRANCH AT TUNI

A new branch of IRA was inaugurated at Tuni on 9-8-78 for more intensive propagation of Rationalism in the Town. The following are the Office Bearers.

President: Mr. M. Seetharamayya
Secretary: Mr. M. V. Subba Rao
Treasurer: Mr. T. V. S. Raju

* *

BOMBAY RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION

List of office bearers and Members of the Managing Committee for the year 1978/1979

President	--- Mr. Y. A. Lokhandwala
Vice-Presidents	--- Mr. M. K. Samant Mr. P. Prabhakaran
General Secretary	--- Mr. V. K. Gupte
Joint Secretaries	--- Mr. J. U. Belani Mr. P. Viswanathan
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Auditor	--- Mr. V. S. Kurup

RATIONALIST STUDY COURSE

The west Godavari Branch of IRA conducted the second Rationalist Study Course at Y. M. H. A. Hall in Ejuru from 8th to 10th October 1978. While Mr. P. H. V. Somayajulu, Advocate, inaugurated the course Mr. G. Sathyanarayana Murthy, Head of the History Department of Sri C. R. R. College was the Course Director. The faculty included Mr. M. V. Ramamurthy and many other eminent and veteran rationalists of A. P. The course was well attended by as many as 342 participants including many women.

On 10th evening a public Meeting was held at which more than 5000 people were stunned by the demonstration of godmen's tricks by Mr. K. P. Swaminathan, a member of IRA.

- "Gusasy", Eluru

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GOD IN POLICE CUSTODY

Surendranagar September 15.

The idol of a temple, which had fallen into the hands of the police, has been restored to the shrine with the intervention of a court. However, the "God" should appear before the police when asked, the court further ordered.

The idol of the Thaker Mandir at Sayla, 30km from here, was found missing when the priest opened the temple on wednesday morning. On a complaint from the temple authorities the police launched a hunt and traced it to a field. But the limp of law request to return it to the temple as it was a 'stolen property

As the deity was needed for the "jal zilni agiaras" ceremony on Wednesday, the priest moved the court, which directed the return of the idol to the temple. The court also ordered that it should be produced before the Police when called for.

The "zal zilni agiaras" was celebrated in the afternoon with the once dethroned deity at the head of the procession, which moved about the town singing "bhajans".

-Times of India,, 16-9-78

* *

NINETY CRORES TO R.S.S.

The Ministry of Education and Social Welfare has gifted away Rs. 90 crores to R.S.S. ! President of Bombay Rationalist Association, Mr. Y.A. Lokhandwala wrote on 18-8-78 to Mr. Jagjivan Ram, the Defence Minister as follows :

"May we request you to enlighten the people of India what effective measures

have been taken by Defence Department against of reported sinister and subtle massive infiltration into all the sections of the defence department, including all the wings of the army, navy and airforce by the elements inclined towards the venomous, parochial and obscurantist R.S.S. ?

Please also enlighten us how, why and when the Govt. of India had sanctioned grant of rupees ninety crores to the R.S.S. for social welfare activities as publicly alleged by the Ex-Prime Minister of India, which was reported in newspapers and so far not been refuted by the Govt."

Mr. Jagjivan Ram, in his reply on 26-8-78 stated :

"Presumption in para one of your letter is not correct. Regarding para two of your letter, you may refer the matter to the Minister of Education and Social Welfare."

Thus, by not contradicting, Mr. Ram has confirmed the donation. Dr. Pratap Chandra Chunder, Minister for Education was obviously been pressurised by RSS elements so that our 'ancient Hindu Culture' could be revived by RSS spreading its tentacles. Another prop to Brahminism !

* *

COMMUNALISM AT L I C. VELLORE

About a fortnight back the Centenary celebration of the great social reformer Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy was celebrated with pomp not only by the Government of this State but also by the Central Government. Minister for Defence, Mr. Jagjivan Ram inaugurated the celebrations at Erode and at Madras. Central Govern-

ment released a stamp in recognition of Periyar's efforts in creating a casteless society.

In this background it is indeed amazing as to how a Public Sector Institution like L.I.C. of India could come out with a proposition like "IYER YEAR". Posters and wide publicity have been given to this outburst of 'IYERISM' in the L.I.C. of India.

We are aware that the Senior Divisional Manager is an Iyer, Zonal Manager is an Iyer and the Chairman is one step away, an Iyengar, but belonging to the same gene. But this does not justify rank communalistic approach in formulating an "IYER YEAR" programme.

We hope the L.I.C., Vellore would take stamps immediately to annual this programme and issue a public apology to assuage the wounded feelings of those who believe in a classless society like the late Periyar, E.V. Ramaswami.

* *

MIRACLE (1) OF AN OLD CLOCK

The following is a report from 'The Times of India'

"Vatican City August 17 (Reuter) :Pope Paul's favourite alarm clock unexpectedly rang at the moment he died, Vatican spokesman, Father Romeo Panciroli, recalled yesterday.

The Pope was attached, ever since his diplomatic career in Poland, to a little old alarm clock which he never lost and always took with him on his journeys," Father Panciroli said.

"It regularly awoke him every morning at six. On Sunday, August 6, unexpectedly the little alarm clock rang at 9-40 p.m. the moment when the Holy Father was dying", he added"

A fantastic claim of-course. The gullible would be too ready to accept the above as gospel truth. Divinity is sustained by miracles. Deification of the dead pope therefore calls for some miracles. The above alleged incident (?) is only an invention in this behalf. Pity on thee, Vatican spokesman, you could invent only such a silly idea. The poor public has no means to verify your claim. The actual time of death remains unknown!

G. Viswanathan, Bombay △

Contd from page No323

wasteful burning of many millions of rupees worth of food articles), the education minister bountifully donates Rs. 900 million to R.S.S. to enable the latter to pursue their 'cultural' activities. In order not to be accused of non-conformism, the 'Harijan' Defence Minister extols to the nation the importance of the 'divine' language Sanskrit

We are, no doubt, a nation on the march—but in the reverse direction. An office of the state-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India have come out with a brilliant idea of celebrating an 'Iyer Year'. Can you beat it? If you want further proof, the education ministry has transferred about two thousand teachers to give birth to R.S.S. teachers in the urban areas of the north.

Thus physical, financial and psychological boost is given to the R.S.S. to stem the tide of revolutionary upheavals. A microscopic minority wishes to subjugate the vast majority through propaganda, intimidation and outright bribery. Protests by depressed classes and the working class are suppressed. Let us close our ranks to bring about total economic and social transformation—not piecemeal reforms. It is not individuals who are going to solve our problems. We need to demolish this entire exploitative system. The road is long and arduous. But we will prove that R.S.S. is no match to the revolutionary zeal of the masses. △

GOD CHECK MATED

(contd. from last issue)

A. Harnath and A. Suryanarayana

SECTION 6 — GOD AND UNIVERSE

- 6.1.1. Do you think that god controls the universe ? (a) Yes (b) No
(If yes, proceed further and if no, go back to question 1.3.1)
- 6.1.2. Do you also think that God created the Universe ? (a) yes (b) No
- 6.2.1. If there are more than one god which god created the Universe ? (a) God of my religion
(b) Each god created a separate Universe
(c) Universe is the result of joint venture of all gods
- 6.3.1. Do you think there was a beginning for the Universe ? (a) yes (b) No
- 6.3.2. If no, how did god create the universe ? (a) Creation and creator are two lines, without beginning and without end, running parallel to each other
(b)
- 6.3.3. If 'a', can we call them creator and creation ? (a) yes (b) No
- 6.3.4. If Yes, to question 6.3.1. what was there before its creation ? (a) Nothing
(b) Some more Universes which are extinct
- 6.3.5. If 'b' what would be god doing during these intervals between the end of a Universe and the creation of a new one ? (a) Sleeping
(b) Nothing
(c) planning for the next one
- 6.3.6. Do you think that this Universe also may have an end ? (a) yes (b) No
- 6.3.7. If so, what would remain after the present Universe comes to a close ? (a) God alone
(b) Nothing
- 6.4.1. If god created the Universe when did he create it ? (a) 4004 B.C.
(b) 4500 millions of years back.
(c) No beginning

- 6 . 4 . 2. In how many days did he create it ? (a) 6 days
(b) ...
- 6 . 4 . 3. Why did he create it ? (a) Just for fun (Leela)
(b) ...
- 6 . 5 . 1. Do you think Universe is limited in size ? (a) yes (b) No
- 6 . 5 . 2. If so what are its limits ?
- 6 . 5 . 3. What is existing outside the Universe ?
- 6 . 5 . 4. Where are the Hell, Heaven etc.? (a) Within the Universe
(b) Outside the Universe
(c) abstract
- 6 . 5 . 5. If 'a' or 'b' what would be the size of the heaven? (a) Length, breadth and height are 1,500 miles each
(b) ...
- 6 . 6 . 1. Do you think that various natural phenomena like rains, day and night, eclipse etc. are all controlled by god ? (a) yes (b) No
- 6 . 6 . 2. If so, do you also think that catastrophes like earth quakes, cyclones, volcanoes, floods, tornados etc. are also caused by god ? (a) yes (b) No
- 6 . 6 . 3. If so, why does he cause these catastrophes ? (a) For punishing the wicked
(b) Just for fun (leela)
- 6 . 6 . 4. If no to question 6.6.2, are these occurrences beyond the control of god ? (a) yes (b) No
- 6 . 7 . 1. If 'a' to question 6.6.3, why god created evil at all ? (a) Just for fun (Leela)
(b) ...
- 6 . 7 . 2. Does he ensure that only evil perishes ? (a) yes (b) No
- 6 . 7 . 3. Why does he then annihilate children, cattle etc. who cannot be called "evil"? (a) ...
(b) ...
- 6 . 7 . 4. Why does he also annihilate inanimate things like hospitals, schools etc. which are needed for betterment and progress ?
- After answering the questions in this section do you still feel :
- 6 . 8 . 1. That god created the Universe? (a) yes (b) No
- 6 . 8 . 2. that your belief in god stands to reason? (a) yes (b) No
- (If your answer is yes against 6.8.2. proceed to the next section)

SECTION 7 — GOD AND EVOLUTION

- 7.1.1. Do you believe in Darwin's Theory of Evolution? (a) yes (b) No
- 7.1.2. If 'no', how so many kinds of species came into being? (a) Individually created by god
(b) —
- 7.2.1. Do you agree that the ancestors of man walked on four legs and evolution of man was gradual over a period of millions of years? (a) yes (b) No
- 7.2.2. Do you agree that the ancestors of man never used tools and their reasoning faculties were extremely poor? (a) yes (b) No
- Do you agree :
- 7.3.1. that different languages and their scripts came into being from different kinds of sounds made by different groups of people? (a) Yes (b) No
- 7.3.2. that more sophisticated tools, weapons and other appliances came into being long after man evolved himself? (a) Yes (b) No
- 7.3.3. that clothing, housing, household equipment, electricity, electronics etc, are also of recent origin? (a) Yes (b) No
- 7.4.1. do you agree that the above progress and process are the result of the continuous and patient research of the human beings? (a) Yes (b) No
- 7.4.2. Do you agree that when god created the earth, there were no cities, no roads, no travel facilities, no clothing and no proper shelter? (a) Yes (b) No
- 7.4.3. If 'yes', why the god himself did not create the modern civilized world in the beginning itself? (a) God wanted to test the abilities of man
(b) God was not capable of doing it.
(c) God did not want the civilization,
(d) Evolution is the God's Method of creation

- 7.4.4. If 'd' to question 7.4.3, what is god supposed to be doing after creating the universe?
- (a) Guiding the universe to evolve itself
(b) just watching the evolution
(c) nothing
- 7.4.5. If 'a' to question 7.4.4, why is the evolution so slow and so imperfect?
- 7.4.5. If 'a' to question 7.4.4 why should religious leaders fight for perpetuating traditions, culture, heritage etc. ?
- 7.5.1. Do you agree that the future holds a better for man ?
- (a) Yes (b) No
- 7.5.2. If 'yes', do you think that better things will be possible without human efforts ?
- (a) Yes (b) No
- 7.6.1. How did the early man come to know of god ?
- (a) By sheer imagination
(b) By realization
(c) God himself might have told him
- 7.6.2. What were the forms worshipped by the primitive man ?
- (a) Natural phenomena like Sun, Moon, Earth, Air, Rain, Fire, Snakes, etc.
(b) Idols of the present day
- 7.6.3. Do you think that there was any concept of god before man evolved himself ?
- (a) Yes (b) No
- 7.7.1. Do you agree that ancient religious literature would have been based only on the then available knowledge ?
- (a) Yes (b) No
- 7.7.2. Do you agree that the primitive man might have attributed whatever that could not be understood by him, to god ?
- (a) Yes (b) No
- After answering all the above questions do you still believe that
- 7.8.1. God created everything ?
- (a) Yes (b) No
- 7.8.2. Your belief in god stands to reason ?
- (a) Yes (b) No
- (If your answer is 'yes' against 7.8.2, proceed to the next section)

SECTION 8 — GOD AND MAN

- | | | | |
|--------|--|---------|--------|
| 8.1.1. | Do you believe that first man and first woman were created by god ? | (a) Yes | (b) No |
| 8.1.2. | If so, do you think god stopped creation with first man and woman ? | (a) Yes | (b) No |
| 8.1.3. | If 'no', do you think that their subsequent off-shoots are also creations of god ? | (a) Yes | (b) No |
| 8.1.4. | If so, do you think controlling the births is against will of god ? | (a) Yes | (b) No |
| 8.2.1. | Do you think god is against human prosperity ? | (a) Yes | (b) No |
| 8.2.2. | Do you think that all men are prosperous ? | (a) Yes | (b) No |
| 8.3.1. | Do you think god is watching helplessly the people who are controlling births against his will ? | (a) Yes | (b) No |
| 8.3.2. | If 'no' do you think that god is making the religious heads to fight against family-planning ? | (a) Yes | (b) No |
| 8.3.3. | Do you then think Doctors, etc. engaged on Family Planning are acting independent of god's control ? | (a) Yes | (b) No |
| 8.4.1. | Do you think that god kills people to punish them ? | (a) Yes | (b) No |
| 8.4.2. | If 'yes', do you think trying to save one from death is against the will of god ? | (a) Yes | (b) No |
| 8.4.3. | If so, do you think that hospitals, doctors, medicines, and the like are directed against god ? | (a) Yes | (b) No |
| 8.4.4. | If 'yes' why did god allow them to grow ? | | |

- 8 . 5 . 1. What exactly you mean by the word sin ?
- (a) Against divine law (dictionary meaning)
 - (b) against principles of morality (dictionary meaning)
 - (c) to act against the law of the land
 - (d) to act against one's conscience
 - (e) dishonesty
- 8 . 5 . 2. If 'a', do we have the free will to act against god and displease him ?
- (a) yes (b) no
- 8 . 5 . 3. If 'c', why should the god try to enforce the law which is framed by people and changed from time to time ?
- 8 . 5 . 4. If 'b' or 'd' or 'e' do you think that what is done in accordance with god's wish can be called a sin ?
- (a) yes (b) no
- 8 . 5 . 5. When is the man punished for his sins ?
- (a) During his life time
 - (b) During his next birth
 - (c) In the hell
 - (d) not punished at all
- 8 . 6 . 1. If 'a' to question 8,5,1, why are different acts considered as sins in different places by different people and at different times?
- After answering all the above questions do you still feel that
- 8 . 7 . 1. god created man ?
- (a) yes (b) no
- 8 . 7 . 2. your belief in god stands to reason ?
- (a) yes (b) no
- (If your answer is 'yes' against 8 . 7 . 2. proceed to the next section)

SECTION 9 — GOD AND SUPERSTITION

- 9.1.1. What is superstition ?
- (a) What some people believe that which I do not believe
(b) All religious beliefs
(c) Irrational fear of the unknown [or mysterious (dictionary meaning)]
(d)
- 9.1.2. Are you superstitious as per dictionary meaning ?
- (a) yes (b) No
- 9.2.1. Do you agree that belief in god is also superstition ?
- (a) yes (b) no
- 9.3.1. Do you really think that all the religious beliefs and practices are based on reason
- (a) yes (b) no
- If 'yes', do you think that the following religious beliefs are rational ?
- 9.4.1. that certain times are auspicious/inauspicious?
(e.g. Rahukalam, Fridays, Saturdays, Full moon-day, new moon-day, etc.)
- (a) yes (b) No
- 9.4.2. that certain places are holy/unholy or lucky/unlucky ?
- (Rameswaram, Tirumalai, Sabarimalai, Velankanni, etc)
- (a) yes (b) no
- 9.4.3. that certain material objects are lucky/unlucky ?
- (Mangala Sutra, Talismans, Ganges water, lucky stones, lucky pen certain metals etc)
- (a) Yes (b) No
- 9.4.4. that certain numbers are lucky/unlucky ?
(e.g. no- 1, no. 3, no. 8, no. 13, no. 18 etc)
- (a) Yes (b) No
- 9.4.5. that certain colours are lucky/unlucky ?
(e.g. Saffron, Red, Yellow, White, black etc)
- (a) Yes (b) No
- 9.4.6. that certain persons have telepathy, clairvoyance and other occult, supernatural or extra sensory powers ?
- (e.g. Saibaba, Uri Geller, Mahesh yogi etc)

- 9.5.1. If 'yes', how do you think that each of the above beliefs can be rationally verified or proved?
- (a) By scientific experiments
(b) By Inferences from known and proven facts (deduction)
(c) By statistical and survey methods (induction)
- 9.5.2. If 'no' are you sure that you do not hold any of the above beliefs?
- (a) yes (b) No
- 9.5.3. After answering all the above questions do you still think that your belief in god stands to reason and it is not a superstition?
- (a) yes (b) no
- (If 'yes', not even your own 'God' can help you!

EPILOGUE

Now you have read and perhaps answered all the questions (!) or atleast attempted to answer all the questions. You might have by now appreciated how shallow were your thoughts especially on the concept of God. These questions might have provoked many more questions in your mind. Try to answer them for your self. With the hypothesis that there is a god, you will not be able to answer most of them. You have to necessarily come to the logical and rational conclusion that there is no god.

If you are already so convinced, kindly accept our hearty congratulations. If not, take your own time. Better late than never—also better to be an agnostic rather than a theist.

If you are able to come out of the darkness of religion and god, why don't you try to help your family members, relatives, friends, colleagues, neighbours etc. to see the light. We are prepared to help you in this area.

There are many more who are yet to be enlightened. Why don't you become a Member of I.R.A. and share the burden. What you contribute in terms of money to the Association is negligible. But what you indirectly contribute to the nation is invaluable and also what you save for your own family and for yourself is considerable.

A CAUTION

It will not suffice if you just become an Atheist. You must at the earliest become a Rationalist too—i.e. you must be able to distinguish good from bad'. The judgement is of course yours. As you are not answerable to god you must be true to your conscience. While you are always free to help yourself and your family please ensure that in the bargain you are not harming others in the society. If possible try to help others.

**GOD IS CERTAINLY NOT NECESSAR
— BUT GOODNESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY**

The Vacuum Argument - Myth, Mystery or Fact?

P. K. Narayanan

(Contd. from last issue)

Human mind was no exception. The humanist ideas were applied in the cure of insanity too. For the first time, in Europe, mentally deranged persons were recognised as medical patients. The prisons in which they had been detained were recognised as hospitals, organised psychiatric hospitals back from that time.

The new era in the field of psychiatry was indicative of the beginning of scientific studies to understand mental phenomena more deeply and thoroughly. The seat of mind, was directed in the body rather than elsewhere in the realms of a spirit or immortal soul. This was a great turning point. The details collected through observations of cases of mental derangements undoubtedly proved that mind is connected with the working of the brain. That any treatment for derangement of the mental equilibrium would be directed to the brain and that no amount of torture of the individual would bring about the cure was recognised by a section of the scientific community. These findings evoked prolonged discussion in the first half of the nineteenth century. Heated debates flared up between the advocates of spiritualistic and physiological views. They virtually fought fierce verbal battles keeping their position unchanged on both the sides. The explosive topic they battled on was whether it was the soul or the body that was deranged in mental diseases.

The followers of psychic school i.e. the spiritualists held mystical views on

the cause and nature of mental derangements. The treatment resorted to by them was, therefore, mystical and obscure in accordance with their concept. However, progress of science and consolidation of materialistic positions in philosophy helped the physiological school ultimately to triumph.

THE ORIENTAL EGO

There is a forceful revivalist tendency bred, nurtured and propagated by a section of the people in India, today. This section by its hold on certain political parties, often has been able to implement its pursuits playing havoc in vulnerable pockets in villages, towns and cities.

This people among so many other things, stand for Indianisation and revival of Indian culture. When they say Indianisation, they invariably mean Hinduisation. By Indian cultures, they have no doubt mean re-establishment of "Chatur varna Vyavastha" in the land of Hinduised India, that is Bharat.

A member of the said sect, with tears running through his cheeks, with vengeful gesticulations described the glory of Ancient Bharat in the following words:

"The Westerners had stolen away our ancient books and manuscripts containing invaluable techniques. When they made new inventions, they simply copied the secret formulae which our great rishis and seers had written thousands of years ago.

"You know what the Wright Brothers did, when they made the first flight in an heavier than air mechanised aeroplane? Thieves, they fooled the whole world by cheating us in stealing the secret formula which had gone into the making of the holy "Pushpaka Viman".

It is sheer nonsense to imagine that our ancient scriptures contained all branches of

knowledge, all formulae and techniques, that all the scientific inventions were already known to ancient sages who had put these secrets down in holy verses.

The claims that sages of ancient India had known and written down the secrets of all knowledge is an excellent example in this respect. Such claims keep the cerebral functions of the general mass of people at the lowest ebb in so far as their thirst of objective enquiry is concerned. It works as opium dopes on people invested with the belief in the non-existent inheritances! With the result that it satisfies their ego, keeps them in oblivion in a world of their own.

DUALISM CONFIRMED

What, then, was the concept of mind like according to ancient Indian thoughts? It would be interesting to trace out:

Basically, the phenomena of mind had been regarded to be something in addition to the working of 'Indryas', that is, senses. The dual status of mind was well recognised in Indian thought.

The scriptures deal with the nature and or working of mind. The phenomenon is supposed to possess three states denoting ego, wisdom and mind. Mind has no independent existence without soul.

References about different types of mental activities can be found in the synonyms attributed to mind in 'Ithareyopanishat'. Similarly, functions of mind are explained in "Brihadaranyakora", the near meaning of which could be "lust, ideas, reasoning, belief, on-belief, imagination, timidity, wisdom and so on.

According to 'Advaitas', mind is only one aspect of 'Conscience'. Other aspects being wisdom, ego and 'Chit'. Whereas mind is doubtful and subjective in essence, wisdom is definitive and objective.

A distantry of similarity Gestalt Psychology can be observable in certain narrations: 'Nyas' and 'Vaisheshikas' explain mind to be "Atom". Atma or soul is separate entity. The great moment of transformation of 'knowledge' takes place when mind, the atom combines with Atma, the soul,

AYURVEDA

Turning to Ayurveda, the medical code of ancient India, one can find very interesting hypotheses about the concept of mind. Since Ayurveda specifies prescriptions for treatment of mental diseases as well, and for generations, these prescriptions had been scrupulously followed by practising Vaidas (a qualified Ayurvedic medico) the nature and working of mind and the diagnostic methods relied upon draw more attention.

At the outset Ayurveda views that all mental disorders have their origin lying in reincarnation (Punarjanma). It holds that habit formation of man depends on his "Karma" during his previous life and his mental transformation is guided by those 'Karmas'. On this basic supposition only Ayurvedic prescribes treatment. That is the one reason why Ayurveda condemns Atheists who do not believe in rebirths and denies them treatment. See how 'Charaka' cautions his followers in this respect:

"THATRA BUDHIMAN NASTHIKYAM
JAHYAL VICHIKITSAMGHA"

Ayurveda conclusively states that mind is located in the heart. There is no difference of opinion on this score among any of the three medical codes of "Ashtangahridaya", "Charaka" and "Shushrnta".

In Tantra and Upanishads references could be seen about a mind located in heart. "Lotus shaped heart is the place of soul" according to "Sangeetharatnakaram". "Yogashikhopanishat" says that soul (mind) resides in the heart.

(to be contd. in next issue)

Can Dalits Get Justice?

Ms. Chandra Thool

There is one village named "ASOLI" in Nagpur district, which is about 11-12 miles away from Nagpur on Nagpur-Bhandara road. The village consists of 5-80 houses, having a population of 350-400, out of which there is only one Neo-Buddhist family named "DAMAJI LANJEWAR".

Socially Damaji was leading a life of the so-called untouchables. But as he has got a small piece of land of 5-6 acres, he used to cultivate for himself by engaging the Caste Hindu labourers and, during slack season, his wife used to work in the field of Caste Hindus. Though there exists a relationship of landlord and labourer, the so-called untouchable was prohibited to fetch water from the village public well.

UNTOUCHABILITY

During Emergency, when one Police Officer visited the village 'Asoli' to observe the practice of untouchability, he noted that the said Neo-Buddhist family was prohibited to draw water from the public well and was denied a barber for shaving, cutting etc. The Police Officer convinced the villagers and barbers and told them to give equal treatment. Though the Caste Hindus allowed them to draw water and the barber shaved under the influence of Police authority, in their minds they declined to wipe out the feelings, which had taken deep roots over years.

MURDER

Suddenly in the month of January 1978, a boy of 11 years named "Sukharaj" a second son of Damaji disappeared from the village. On enquiry, it was learnt that he had been to school and after interval he did not come back to school, but was playing with the bullock cart of Mr. Anandrao Choure (the richest landlord of the village) upto 6-00 p.m. When the parents, returning from the fields, didn't find their son at home, they searched every where upto 10 p.m. but all in vain.

Next day the boy's corpse was found at some distance from the village. The corpse bore injuries around the neck and an injury near the ear. Though it was informed to the Police, they came very late. Without any preliminary enquiry, they tried to seize the corpse. When Mr. Damaji opposed it and asked the police to bring a 'Dog Squad', initially the police refused but after a considerable time, a dog was brought. When the dog smelled the corpse, it rushed to Choure's field where a rope was hanging. The dog at once barked loudly at the rope. Then the rope and the corpse were seized. But the people were astonished that nobody was arrested inspite of repeated requests made by several social organisations to bring to books the culprit. But the Police evaded saying that they did not have any evidence that it was an incident happening out of caste prejudice. On the other hand the landlord had created such an atmosphere, that none out of the 400 in the village dared to come out to utter the truth.

POLICE CONNIVANCE

Police investigation is really a very disheartening thing. When some social workers from Nagpur went to the village, they saw that a police jeep was standing

in front of the said Choure's house and one police man was putting some green vegetables etc., In which a Police Officer too was sitting.

It does not require much intelligence to understand how our police and administration function at the behest of Upper Caste Hindus and landlords. Can't the Police understand that they cannot work impartially if they have been obliged by one or other means. But it is totally useless to lament over such a situation because it is not merely apathy on the part of administration towards the common man but it is essentially the Caste and Class interests of Bureaucracy. Our capitalist society is mainly based on "Chatur Varna". This is the main cause for Casteism. As a matter of fact, casteism, is one of the main characteristic of Feudalism, wherein Bureaucracy can't play an impartial role. Bureaucracy safeguards the interest of its class and caste only, as we see in almost all cases.

ANOTHER SON BEATEN UP

When all these things were going on, again another incident happened. The eldest son of Damaji "Shri Krishna" was beaten very seriously by tying his hands and legs and clouting his mouth till he became unconscious. When the next day, a shepherd saw him, he informed the villagers. After regaining consciousness Krishna narrated the story to the Police authorities. But the Police did not take notice of the complaint though he uttered the names of those who tortured him.

In this connection too, nobody was arrested though social organisations demanded the arrest of the accused and that justice be done. But it is unimaginable how biased the police are against dalits—as they are part and parcel of the establishment. When the police found that they had been caught in a tight spot, they showed their shrewd-

ness by spreading a false story that Damaji himself had murdered his son Sukhraj.

Then naturally a question arose as to why police did not arrest Damaji for committing a murder? Is Damaji so powerful as to create any sort of influence or bring any type of pressure? The answer is simple. The Police just in order not to arrest the real culprit, prepared a fictitious story.

In view of the rigid approach of the Police towards the problem, some social organisations decided to fight for justice and educate the masses by eradicating caste complex. We had decided to organise one meeting at Asoli as a part of the programme. But Police imposed a Prohibitory order under Section 37(1) of Bombay Police Act and restricted us from entering the village. But to violate the prohibitory order, we took a morcha under the leadership of Mr. M.Y. Dalvi, the President of Rationalist Association of Maharashtra Unit.

See the irony! When he violated the unjust prohibitory order demanding justice and arrest of the accused, instead of arresting the accused, they arrested the 52 workers and detained us in their custody for ten days. The accused were at large in the society enjoying prestige and power. Upto the time of writing these lines, no arrest has been made. Instead the District Police transferred the murder case to State C.I.D. and the second case of attempt at murder has been transferred to Police Unit for protection of Civil Rights. But one wonders why no arrest has yet been made.

It is beyond our capacity to imagine that such a man could still live in the same village without any proper police protection, whose one son was killed while attempts were made to kill another son for the 'crime' of drawing water from a public well, being an 'UNTOUCHABLE'. △

Extra Terrestrial Life - A Possibility?

E. G. A. Namboodiri

On June 30, 1908 in the Siberian forest of Tungus Taiga, a mysterious explosion took place with the force of several atom bombs. Still no fully acceptable explanation is given for the incident. Some Soviet Scientists say that the explosion might have occurred when one alien spacecraft came and collided with the earth. The wood samples collected from that forest area was showing unusually high radioactivity. Some 70 years ago, when splitting of the atom was not even a dream of scientists how could there be such a nuclear explosion, unless it was the action by some beings from the far off space? If it was an accidental explosion of a space craft, why no further such indications thereafter? Why could we not detect any civilization in the outerspace in spite of our rapid and tremendous scientific and technological advancements?

It was the great hopes of finding out at least some microforms of life in Mars, that two Viking space crafts were launched by NASA to that red planet 505 million miles away over a 303-day trip on 31-8-75. The crafts landed on Mars as scheduled. But so far the chemical and biochemical analyses results received from the unmanned spacecrafts are contra-indicatory of life on

that planet. Well, it was only one more of the experiments, in a series, that we earthlings were conducting to detect some form of life in the universe other than our earth that also failed to click.

Earlier different experiments were conducted by different scientists to find out the possibility of extra-terrestrial life. One such worth mentioning was conducted by using the radio-telescope at Ohio, U.S.A. The telescope scanned thousands of stars in our galaxy—the Milky way. It was working on the assumption that extra-terrestrial beings will broadcast on the 21 cm wavelength corresponding to the frequency of atomic hydrogen since hydrogen is the most abundant element in the universe. But those experiments gave no encouraging results. It remains a fact still that in spite of our extreme optimism and excessive spending we have not yet got any clue as to the presence of life, as we know it on the earth, in the extra-terrestrial regions.

May be the extra-terrestrial beings are not so much advanced as we ourselves are. Or may be our knowledge and scientific improvements are so poor that our instruments cannot detect the presence of other highly civilized beings in outerspace. Or may be life does not exist anywhere else in this universe. Who knows the truth? Are we searching for something which is non-existent? Are we wasting money only to be proved that we were really wasting money? Will our optimism turn out to be a mirage?

Spending money on scientific research projects may never turn out to be full wastes. May be for a small achievement we might have had to spend a lot of money. But as far as it contributed to the advancement of science—however small that might be—we cannot call it a waste. Scientists, ideas may look crazy in the

beginning but many of those ideas turn out to be possibilities afterwards. Remember even in 1950s space travel was a crazy idea of scientists, beyond ordinary man's comprehension. But space travel and staying in spaceships in outer space for days or even months together have become the order of the day just after about two decades hence?

Our earth is a tiny planet of the star, sun, in the galaxy called the 'Milky Way'. Sun is only a rather insignificant star among the millions in this galaxy. And there are so many million such galaxies like the 'Milky Way' in the universe. In such a case, is it not possible that life could exist in other planets of different stars in the various galaxies? Even statistical calculations with the most pessimistic assumptions would show that atleast in a few thousand more planets in the whole universe conditions similar to or better than those on earth are prevailing and civilizations in various stages compared to that of ours, should exist on them. While addressing the Indian Science Congress on 5-1-76, at Vishakhapatnam, Dr Cyril Ponnampereuma, Director of the Institute of Chemical Evolution at the University of Maryland, USA said that there were one million civilizations in our galaxy alone! May be he was a bit more optimistic.

Probably the most significant limitations in detecting civilizations in outerspace is the spread barrier posed by us. According to Einstein's Theory of Relativity, the maximum speed matter can achieve is that of light wave (3×10^{10} cm/sec. or 186,000 miles per second) and as the speed of a particle reaches that of light, its mass tends to infinity. Our space ships have negligible speed compared to that of light. So it takes millions of years to reach a star far away from our galaxy. Hence we can only imagine the small life span of human beings

compared to the millions of years required to reach stars in the outerspace. In fact we speak only of light years in Astronomy and cosmology. A light year is the distance covered by a light wave travelling at the speed of 300,000 km per second in one year. Astronomers have found out an object supposed to be at the edge of the universe at 26,000 million light years away in space which means the light rays from that object reaching earth began its journey before the earth was born! According to the latest estimations, earth was formed 5000 millions years ago and first form of life appeared on it around 1500 million years ago. Man has had hardly two or three million years of existence on this earth. Our human age is nothing compared to these astronomical ages and we are forced to believe that one day or other we should invent a machine that would be able to overcome the 'light speed barrier' and take us to the edge of the universe in a month or two of 'human time'.

Here comes Dr. C.E.G. Sudarshan with his theory of particles having speed faster than that of light. In 1958 he propounded the theory which prophesied the existence of faster than light particles consistent with the theory of relativity. The Cerenkov radiation in fact could be a fore-runner in this field. When electrons or other charged particles moving with a speed close to that of light in vacuum, on entering a medium of sizeable index of refraction, finds itself moving faster than electromagnetic waves. The result is something like a shock wave of visible or ultra-violet radiation called the Cerenkov Radiation. In water pools where radioactive material are stored, Cerenkov radiation is visible. In one sense this radiation is the result of faster than light speeds. In such a case is it not possible to have particles having faster than light speeds; And once such particles are dis-

covered, we can communicate with outer-space civilizations in minutes and hours and the so called light years can be converted into man hours! To overcome the concept of infinite mass at light speed Dr. Sudarshan postulated that such particles were initially emitted with faster than light speeds. Dr. Gerald Feimberg of the Columbia University opined that the inability of scientists to spot such a particle might be because of its neutrality that is lacking of electrical charge. Such particles are supposed to lose mass instead of gaining it as their speed increases just the reverse of Einstein's theory! The problem is only when these particles slow down to the speed of light when their masses will become infinity again as the speed of light is reached. This concept is in accordance with the 'antimatter theory'. In 1920, P.A M. Dirac put forward the theory that for every kind of matter there is an antimatter of the same kind but of opposite charges or some other property. This theory was also partially proved when positron, with the mass of electron but with positive charge was discovered.

Dr. Feimberg named the faster than light particles "Tachyons" from the Greek word for fast. His view was that tachyons could drive a space ship at very high speeds than that of light waves and thus the speed barrier for communication. If civilization exists on the far side of Milky way, it would take more than a lakh of years before a light wave reaches it. By this time thousands of generations might have lived on this earth and perished! If "tachyons" could be utilized then naturally it would take only a few days or months for the above journey. "Tachyons" are supposed to have no mass or an imaginary mass or an imaginary mass to permit Einstein's theory to accommodate it. Square root of

-1 is such an imaginary number used in mathematical calculations.

While launching the Viking space crafts Mr. Robert Kracemer, NASA Director for planetary programmes said "Even if we don't find life on Mars, I believe life is teeming in the universe." A prominent astronomer Dr. Frank D. Drake of Cornell University and Director of the world's largest radio telescope at Arecibo, Puerto Rico, said in February 1978 that the existing ground-based equipment and the new orbiting telescope to be launched in 1983 would be able to detect earth-sized planets around the nearest 40 stars. He thinks the chances of finding planets among the stars are cent per cent by the year 2000 and the best method for it is by listening to the radio transmission from other planets.

A discovery announced in February 1978 also reopens the possibility of life existing on Mars. It was the existence of tiny organisms hiding in the interior rocks of the antarctic wastes which are subjected to freezing temperatures and fierce winds. Microvegetation found out there by scientists shows that even in extreme climatic conditions like those existing in Mars, life can thrive

So even though the idea of finding out civilisations or at least some form of life in some other planets or stars, at present is fantastic, let us wait and see. With the advance of science let us hope a day may come when we will find ourselves no longer alone in the universe. Our technology and scientific knowledge have not reached the 'no-further' development stage which probably may never occur. Let us be optimistic. Let us wait and see.

Synthetic Superstition

J. B. S. Haldane

One definition of superstition is "other people's religion". I certainly disagree with many points in other people's religious opinions, but I am not, going to attack them here. Religious doctrines, even when they are untrue, are generally part of a system in which some intelligent and thoroughly decent people believe.

I propose to discuss the synthetic superstitions which are being manufactured as "opium for the people," particularly astrology. Large numbers of Sunday news papers keep a tame astrologer, and I sometimes look at their columns.

Now I don't despise real astrology. It began thousands of years ago in an attempt to link up happenings in the earth with those in the sky. It led to the keeping, in Babylon and other cities of what is now almara of exact records of eclipses and other celestial events which have been of greatest use to modern astronomers.

And in the late Middle Ages it developed into an art with elaborate rules. In order to cast a horoscope, you had to know the positions of all the planets at the time of a person's birth. Indeed, for accurate prediction the exact hour is needed. Each planet was supposed to have a good, bad or neutral influence

And the sky was divided up into "houses" concerned with various aspects of human life. Thus if at the time of your birth Saturn and Mars were in conjunction on the House of Death, you were likely to

meet with an early and violent death. A given day was or not lucky for a person whose birth hour was known, according to very complicated rules.

These rules were supposed to embody the wisdom of the ancient Chaldeans. Astrology had a great influence on the thought and language of ordinary people. Such common words as "consider," "disaster," "influenza," and "conjunction," all derive from astrological theory. Astrology received shattering blows when two large new planets, Uranus and Neptune, were discovered, not to mention one moderate-sized one, Pluto, and about 1,000 dwarf planets. The wise man of the East had never discovered them and the attempt to fit them into a coat of arms.

For astrology, like heraldry, has its rules, and is a quite amusing thought rather futile hobby. If I were a genuine astrologer following the great tradition of the "science", I should be even more angry with the Sunday new practitioners than with complete sceptics.

For these ladies and gentlemen predict your lucky days on the basis of the month in which you were born. I was born when the sun was in the constellation called the Scorpion. Now, according to traditional astrology, this alone does not tell me much. If the lucky planets, Venus and Jupiter, were there, too, then I may look forward to certain kinds of good luck.

But, if astrology is true it is as ridiculous to predict a person's fortune from
(Contd. on page 349)

NATION MOURNS KOVOR'S DEATH

AT BOMBAY

Mr. Y. A. LOKHANDWALA, President of IRA stated in his message that all rationally thinking persons in India were deeply grieved by the death of Dr. Abraham Kovoov, veteran rationalist crusader against superstitious miracles perpetrated by so-called saints and babas, as his inspiring guidance was vitally needed now when revivalism of blind faiths, miracles and myths is rampant throughout India and parochial obscurantism is spreading its tentacles far and wide. Therefore he has called upon all rationalists in India to organize condolence meetings in collaboration with like-minded organisations and resolve to carry forward the crusade initiated by Dr. Kovoov more vigorously.

AT DELHI

The General Body meeting of the Delhi Rationalist Association was held on 24th September 78 unanimously the following resolution expressing condolence over the sudden demise of Dr. A. T. Kovoov was passed.

1 "The Delhi Rationalist Association expresses its condolence over the sudden demise of the veteran Rationalist Dr. A. T. Kovoov

2 Dr. Kovoov fought throughout his life for the cause of Rationalism. His fight against the fraudulent godmen of India has picked up momentum throughout India and other Asian countries

3 At this moment, we rededicate ourselves to go ahead carrying the light of reason".

AT BANGALORE

A condolence meeting was held under the auspices of Karnataka Rationalist Association at the Bangalore University Senate Hall on 25-9-78. While Dr. H. Narasimhaiah the former Vice-chancellor of Bangalore University presided over the meeting, M/s. Basavalingappa, Minister of Karnataka Government, Prof. A. M. Dharmalingam President of K. R. A. Mr. V. T. Rajesekhara shetty, Secretary of KRA, P. K. Narayanan and others spoke on the contribution made by Dr. Kovoov to the Rationalist Movement. The meeting also passed a condolence resolution, a copy of which was sent to Dr. Aries Kovoov, son of Dr. A. T. Kovoov.

AT AHMEDABAD

A condolence meeting was held on the demise of Dr. A. T. Kovoov at 9-30 a.m. on 24-9-78 at Akhandanad Hall by Gujarat Rationalist Association. Prof. Jitendra Dholakia of Gujarat University and President of Gujarat Rationalist Association presided. The following honoured the great achievements of the world renowned rationalist and psychiatrist:

- M/s. 1 Narendra Dave (Gujarat Rationalist Association)
- 2 C. K. Balan (General Secretary, GRA)
- 3 D. Patwari (Radical Humanist)

- 4 Ashok Padia (G. R. A.)
- 5 Prof Vyas Prof. of Gujarat University)
- 6 Mr. Mohan Nath (CPI-M)

The following condolence resolution was passed :

"In Dr. A. T. Kovoov's demise not only the Rationalist Association or the Rationalist Movement, but the whole man kind has lost a great crusader against ignorance and exploitation. Dr. Kovoov's name will shine for ever in the galaxy of that great immortals, who were the path makers and path finders in the emancipation of man kind from ignorance and exploitation. We pay homage to his great memory and ideas, which will guide us in propagating rationalism instilling of scientific attitude in the minds of the people and at the same time dispelling of all ignorance from the country".

AT BARODA

Under the auspices of Gujarat Rationalist Association a Public Meeting was held at Sardar Bhavan on 22- 10- 78 at 6.30. p.m. presided over by Mr Kamalashankar Pandya to pay tributes to the memory of Dr Abraham T. Kovoov, well-known all over the world for his crusade against godmanship and exposure of superstitions and blind faith.

Mr. Ratikumar Makwana, young journalist, Sanat O. Mehta of Naya Samaj, Rajesh Dalai student leader and Shri Laxmidas Shrikant, 82 and others paid rich tributes to the unflinching spirit of late Dr. Kovoov who till his last breath worked for Rationalism.

The speakers vowed to carry on the message of Rationalism among the ignorant masses.

AT HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Rationalist Association, Radical Humanist Association, Atheist Centre and Kula Nirmoolana Sangham jointly conducted a meeting on 23-9-78 and expressed their deep regret over the death of Dr. A. T. Kovoov, a world-renowned Rationalist.

Mr. B. Nageshwar, Secretary, Kula Nirmoolana Sangham Presided over the meeting. While discussing the life and work of Dr. A T Kovoov, Mr. T. Bhaskara Sarma, Secretary, Rationalist Association, M. V. Rama Murthy Radical Humanist, Mr. D.G. Rama Rao, President (Hyderabad Branch) Kulanirmoolana Sangham, M/s. M. V. Subbamma, Publisher "VIKASAM" have suggested establishing a library in the twin cities with rationalist literature as a mark of respect to Dr A.T. Kovoov

AT RAMACHANDRAPURAM

B. H. E. L. Employees Cultural Organisation "Sangha Mitra" has conducted a condolence meeting on 21-9-78 at BHEL Community Centre on the death of world famous Rationalist Dr A. T. Kovoov. Prominent members of the organisation stated that the death of Dr. Kovoov is a great loss to Rationalist movement which could not be substituted.

AT ELURU

The West Godavari Branch of I. R. A. in a telegram sent to Sri Lanka Rationalist Association hailed the yeoman services rendered by Dr Abraham T. Kovoov, the world famous rationalist and psychiatrist to the rationalist movement, and expressed its deep felt condolences.

△

Democracp Througy Intimidation and Terror

THE UNTOLD STORY OF KASHMIR POLITCS
BY PREMNATH BAZAZ

Price : Rs 45/-

It is evident that Indian politics is in shambles. This book, as the title indicates, narrates the events in J & K state before and after its Association in 1947 and it affords more proof of the deteriorating party politics exploited by ambitious and selfish leadership.

The author is a rationalist, none popular yet in India and he reluctantly yielded to prove in the Ad-hoc Committee formed by the Janata Party just before the elections held in July 77 and has first hand knowledge of what happened there. He was an associate of Shek Abdulla in J & K state peoples' convention.

The graveman of his charge is that the people of Kashmir were afforded no real opportunity to express their will freely at any time before or after the Accession and that Sheik Mohammed Abdullah on whom Indian leaders and authorities placed their reliance for the State's Accession adopted a strategy of keeping himself in power by taking advantage of the

peculiar political circumstances and by having recourse to reusing communal suspicion and passion. He also used hooliganism, rowdyism and terror tactics.

He describes how the Indian Government of the Janata Party had not given sufficient time to organise Janata Party before the elections which was held within a short period of three months after dissolution of the legislature. The author is justified in his opinion that the Janata leadership did not get over the sub-conscious thoughts of guilt or the suspicions about the wishes of the Muslims generally prevailing among Indian leaders over the Accession, or their reliance on Sheik Abdullah. He has mastered all the details to prove that the Janata Government has signally failed to ensure a free election and virtually played into the hands of Sheik Abdullah.

While pointing out the hurdles which the people have to face before succeeding in installing a secular democratic government such as the Public Safety Act, it is heartening that the author is optimistic in the hope that the Kashmiris can themselves stand up, organise and fight for liberty and achieve democracy through sincere, honest and selfless leadership.

This book is a welcome addition to understand J & K state politics. △

(Cont. from page 346)

the sun alone as it would diaesegnobe to a disease by looking at a patient's tongue without taking his temperature or pulse rate or making any other examination.

Another of these bogus sciences is palmistry. Though some palmists certainly to size up the character of their clients in a very shrewd manner. But the only palmist whose word I trust as to her methods tells me that she gets most of her information "psychically," i.e. she doesn't quite know how.

There is such a thing as scientific palmistry founded by a Viennese woman, Hella Pock, who studied the heredity of the folds in the human palm. She found,

among other things, that when both parents had a line from the wrist to the middle finger on each hand, 70 percent of their children had the same lines, where as when neither parent had such a line, only 9 per cent of the children had one on both hands.

If the astrologers and palmists want to convince scientists of the truth of their "sciences" they have an easy task. No doubt (if their claims are right) they must have discovered that millions of young men were going to die between 1974 and 1978. So they ought to be able to predict the dates of future wars. When they get a few such dates right I shall take them seriously. But I am not much impressed by a few lucky shots. △

Test For Reason No 14

In the following multiplication each letter represents a particular figure :

$$\begin{array}{r}
 1357 \\
 \times \text{DATE} \text{ --- (Multiplier)} \\
 \hline
 \text{LULL} \text{ --- (First partial product)} \\
 \text{RENT} \text{ --- (Second partial product)} \\
 \text{USED} \text{ --- (Third partial product)} \\
 \hline
 \text{UNUUUL} \text{ --- (product)} \\
 \hline
 484449
 \end{array}$$

Can you decipher the codes logically? You may use the mathematical terms indicated above for your explanations.

Rules :

1. The entries should be received on or before 15-11-78.
2. There is a prize of Rs. 10/- in the form of books to be sent to the winner. If there are more than one correct entry, the prize will be decided on lots.
3. Readers are requested to quote their Membership number or Subscription number.

Test for Reason No. 13

It is surprising that no solution-whether correct or not- has been received for Test for Reason No 13. Perhaps it might be due to delayed despatch of October 78 issue and/or a printing mistake crept into the problem (which has however been manually corrected in all the copies). The time limit is therefore extended up to 15-11-78, by which date solutions may be sent for both Tests (No. 13 and 14). For immediate reference the entire division is once again reproduced below.

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{Divisor } xxx) \begin{array}{r} x7xxx \text{ (Quotient)} \\ \hline xxxxxx \text{ (Dividend)} \\ \hline \text{Line 1)} \\ \hline \text{Line 2)} \\ \hline \text{Line 3)} \\ \hline \text{Line 4)} \\ \hline \text{Line 5)} \\ \hline \text{Line 6)} \\ \hline \text{Line 7)} \\ \hline 0 \text{ (Line 8)} \end{array}
 \end{array}$$

X Indicates blanks and does not necessarily represent the same figure. All the blanks have to be ascertained. Δ

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While we are grateful to the above donors, we once again appeal to the other dedicated rationalists who are really interested in the permanent survival of the Rationalist movement to rush their contributions. Special thanks are due to our President, Mr. Y. A. Lokhandwala who has collected a major portion of the above contributions after having earlier contributed Rs. 1500/- himself. It is hoped that others would also be inspired to contribute and also to collect from their friends for the Fund. Demand Drafts and Cheques may Please be drawn in favour of 'Indian Rationalist Association'

—Treasurer I R. A.

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We heartily welcome the following New Members :

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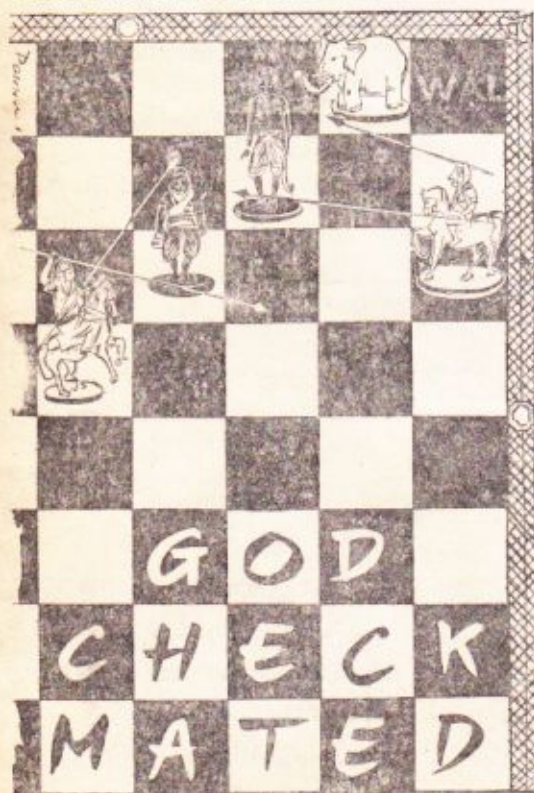
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